

# Protestant Union.

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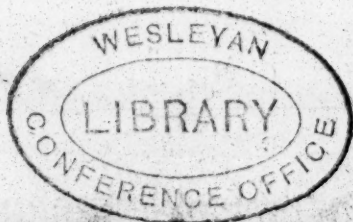
FORMED IN THE YEAR 1798,  
FOR THE BENEFIT  
OF THE  
WIDOWS AND CHILDREN  
OF  
*PROTESTANT MINISTERS*  
OF  
EVERY DENOMINATION.

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1798





# Widows' Fund.

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AN ADDRESS  
TO THE CHRISTIAN LAITY  
IN GREAT-BRITAIN.

GENTLEMEN,

**P**ERMIT us to address you on a subject, which must deeply interest your generosity, your humanity, and your gratitude. It is in behalf of a very valuable, useful, and important class of our fellow-subjects, the Ministers of the Gospel all over the united kingdoms. You are well aware that, in general, no description of men of similar rank is so slenderly provided for in life, and so little enabled to lay up any thing for the support of their families, when they themselves are re-

moved by death. Having most of them their pittance of income paid in money, that pittance is every day, from the advanced price of all the necessaries of life, diminishing in value and effect. A pecuniary stipend, or subscription, is not half the value now, that it was thirty years ago. But the object of this address, is not to devise an increase of revenue to the minister himself; he must continue to struggle though his complicated labours and difficulties as he may; it is to assist him in making some permanent provision for the partner of his humble lot, and for a friendless offspring, should they survive them. In the view of this event he has indeed, as a Christian, much to encourage and support him, but as a man, he is subjected to many painful feelings, and depressing apprehensions, which it would be highly desirable to prevent, or to remove.

No one can be weak enough to think that an attempt to relieve the widow and fatherless children of a minister of the religion of Jesus Christ, by means of a well-digested plan of human prudence; is to encroach on the province of Divine Providence. The great Ruler  
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of the Universe, conducts the affairs of it by created agents, and by the exercise of those powers and faculties which he has committed to them. The example of our blessed Lord is equal to a thousand arguments; to recommend the use of prudent foresight, while we yet live, towards alleviating the distresses of those who are dear to us, after we are dead. In dying agony, and in the very act of pouring out his soul an offering for sin, he felt for the approaching solitude, desertion and dependence of a mother, through whose soul a sword had pierced; and he, who could have provided for her by a miracle, thought proper to employ the kind offices of friendship and compassion. "Woman, behold thy son; my beloved disciple, behold thy mother."

Ministers of the Gospel will not be offended if we say that, in general, they are very indifferent men of business. Wise unto salvation, and to win souls to the Redeemer, many of them are children in understanding, as to the things of this world. There are cases in which we must think and act for them. Partakers as we are of the spiritual benefits which they are commissioned to impart, we lie

under an obligation of justice, as well as gratitude, to let them partake of the benefit of our skill, industry, experience, time and substance.

Impressed with this idea, we, in conjunction with many of our respectable lay friends in the Metropolis, have cheerfully stepped forward to lend counsel and assistance to a body of ministers associated, under the denomination of the *Protestant Union*, for the purpose of forming a plan, and creating a fund, whose annual produce shall constitute a regular, though moderate, provision for the families of deceased ministers, which, from want of such provision, are frequently left in many-formed distress. After much deliberation, in the course of which the first-rate professional abilities have been resorted to, and the experience of similar institutions has been consulted; and after frequently looking up to Heaven for wisdom to direct, a plan has been adopted, of which a copy is herewith transmitted to you: it is respectfully submitted to your consideration, and solicits your support.

Gentlemen, in forming the plan, it was necessary to calculate on a regular annual subscription

scription to the general fund, to be paid by the minister himself, proportional to the benefit devised to survivors. But you must be sensible that, in most cases, this annual payment must become a very heavy burthen. We are called upon therefore, at least to divide it with the good men, whom we are bound to "esteem very highly in love for their works' sake." The liberality of the public will, we flatter ourselves, do more. Is it over-rating the generosity of this great nation, to hope that not many years hence, by the donations, annual subscriptions, collections at places of worship, and bequests of the Laity, a fund, sufficient for all the purposes in contemplation, shall be raised without trenching on the poor scrip of a minister, whose profession obstructs to him the path that leads to wealth, while it entitles him to countenance and support during life, and to all the consolation which friendship can administer in the prospect of dissolution?

[Signed on behalf of the Lay Trustees.]

T. PRESTON, Treasurer.

*Miles's Lane, Oct. 12, 1798.*

We

WE whose names are hereunto subscribed, having met together for the purpose of forming ourselves into a Society, for the benefit of the Widows and Orphans of Protestant Ministers and Preachers, resident in Great Britain, to be called the PROTESTANT UNION, have agreed upon the following plan, under the authority of the Act of Parliament, of the 21st of June, 1793, entitled An Act for the Encouragement and Relief of the Friendly Societies.

## I.

*The Object of which*

Is by a regular annual subscription to form a permanent Fund, so as to allow a certain income to the Widows and Children of ourselves, and of such other persons as shall hereafter become members of this Society.

## II.

*The Means of raising and supporting the Fund.*

1. This Society shall be divided into three classes, that ministers of small, as well as of larger incomes, may have an opportunity of enjoying the benefit of it.

2. That



2. That every minister or preacher, upon his admission, shall make choice of his class, which shall not afterwards be altered, unless he descends from a higher to a lower class.

3. The classes shall be as follows :

1. The members of the first class shall pay the sum of five guineas annually.

2. The members of the second class shall pay the sum of four guineas annually.

3. The members of the third class shall pay the sum of three guineas annually\*.

4. That every member, on his admission, shall pay the first year's subscription in full.

5. That the subscription shall afterwards be paid half yearly, that is to say, on or before the 10th day of December ; and on or before the 30th day of June in each year.

6. That in case any member shall neglect to pay his subscription within one month after it becomes due, he shall pay, according to his class, a forfeit of three shillings, if the class be three guineas ; a forfeit of four shillings, if the

\* N. B. These sums are expected to be raised by collections, in the congregations whose ministers are members of this Society.

class



class be four guineas; a forfeit of five shillings, if the class be five guineas.

7. That if any member of this Society shall fail to pay his subscription, with interest and forfeit, for six months after the same becomes due, he shall be excluded, and also forfeit all his preceding payments.

8. If any member of this society, on leaving the kingdom, shall continue beyond seas for a year and a day at one time, except to exercise his ministry in the neighbouring kingdom of Ireland, or with the knowledge, consent, or permission of the Trustees, his family shall forfeit all interest in the institution; and if any member shall lose his life by the hand of justice, his family shall in like manner lose their interest.

9. That the treasurer or trustees, or any member of this Society will thankfully receive any subscription or donation from those whose benevolence may incline them to assist in raising and supporting the said fund. And all such subscriptions, donations, and bequests shall be part of the stock of this Society.

## III.

*Members and Mode of Admission.*

1. That this Society shall consist of such Protestant ministers and preachers of all denominations in Great Briain as shall become subscribers to the fund, who, without their manual subscription hereto, shall be bound by the rules of this Society as now settled, and by all such other rules as shall hereafter be passed at a general meeting of the Society, and confirmed at a second general meeting.

2. That no minister or preacher now exercising his ministry, who shall neglect to join this society within two years from the date hereof shall hereafter be admitted a member.

3. That if any minister or preacher in England shall neglect to join this society within two years from his commencing preacher, or from his ordination, admission licence, or leaving the academy, he shall forever be ineligible to become a member.

4. That if any minister in Scotland shall neglect to join this society, within two years after his ordination and admission to the charge  
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of a congregation, he shall be for ever ineligible.

5. That after two years from the date hereof, no minister or preacher can be admitted a member who shall be more than the age of forty-five.

6. That all members after the 30th day of December next shall be admitted by ballot, at a general meeting, and no person shall be admitted unless two thirds of the members present ballot for him.

7. That every minister or preacher desirous of becoming a member, shall signify his intention with a certificate, or other satisfying proof of his age, and age of his wife (if any) and the number and age of children (if any) to the Secretary, at least three months before the general meeting.

8. It is, moreover, expressly agreed, that every layman, subscribing one guinea or upwards, annually, be entitled to vote, and be summoned, if in London or Westminster, or within the Bills of Mortality, to attend the General Meetings, but can have no beneficial interest whatsoever in the Funds of this Society.

IV.

IV.

*The Application of the Funds of the Society.*

1. The widow of each minister shall receive according to his class, the following yearly sums :

1. Those whose husbands belonged to the first class, the yearly sum of twenty-five pounds.

2. Those whose husbands belonged to the second class, the yearly sum of twenty pounds.

3. Those whose husbands belong to the third class, the yearly sum of sixteen pounds.

2. That if one or more children should be left, and no widow, they shall be provided for in the following manner :

1. If one child should be left, that child shall receive a sum equal to four years annuity, in the class to which the deceased parent belonged.

2. If two children, they shall receive a sum equal to six years annuity.

3. If three, they shall receive a sum equal to seven years annuity.

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4. If



4. If four children, or more, a sum equal to eight years annuity, and the preceding sums shall be divided equally amongst them, according to their number.

5. While a child or children are minors, the interest of the sum due, at the rate of five per cent. per annum, shall be paid by the trustees half yearly, to the executor or other friend of the orphans, at the discretion of the trustees, till the said child or children attain the age of twenty-one ; when the whole sum shall be paid. In case of the death of one or more children, before the age of twenty-one, then the sum due to the deceased child or children, shall fall into the general fund of the Society.

III. If the widow of a minister shall die, or marry again, within eight years, after the decease of her husband, leaving a child or children, the child or children left, shall be entitled to a sum equivalent to the difference between the sum actually received by the widow, and eight years of said annuity, according to the regulations in the case of other children.

IV. That the said annuities and provisions shall



shall be subject to the following restrictions and regulations :

1. That if any member of this Society shall die before he has been a member two years and a half, and before he has made his first half yearly payment for the third year, then his family is not to receive any benefit from this fund.

2. That if any member of this Society die before he has paid a sum equal to four year's annuity of his widow, the deficiency shall be deducted from the annuity, or the sum to be paid to the children ; provided always that the sum deducted from the widow's annuity, do not in any one year exceed one half of her said annuity.

3. That if any member of this Society shall marry a person twelve years younger than himself, and die, his widow shall not be entitled to the whole of her annuity, nor his children by her (if any) to their provision, unless he has paid into the fund of the Society, a sum equal to six years annuity of his widow, but the deduction shall be as by the preceding article.

4. That annuities to Widows and provisions to Orphans, shall be paid within six months after the death of any member is certified by due proof of his burial, and an affidavit of the identity of the deceased, or otherwise attested to the satisfaction of the Trustees.

5. If at any time it shall appear to the Society, that their Funds will not be sufficient to pay the claims (which is highly improbable) then the Trustees shall be empowered to direct a call to be made upon the several members of this Society in proportion to their classes, for making good any deficiency, provided the call in any one year do not exceed one third of his rate ; and any member refusing to answer such call, shall be excluded, and all his payments forfeited to the benefit of the Society.

6. That if in process of time, through the favour of Divine Providence, it shall appear to the Society, that it has acquired a capital more than sufficient to uphold its credit, as well as to satisfy all claims to which it may be liable, it shall then be competent to the Society to determine whether the surplus fund, shall

shall be applied to increase the allowance to Widows and Children, or to diminish the subscription of the members.

7. That the widow of any minister marrying again, shall lose her annuity from the Society; and whilst she continues a widow, shall at all times make known her place of abode to the Society; and every widow shall, previous to the receiving of her annuity, produce to the Trustees a certificate under the hands of the Minister and Churchwardens, where she may reside, or elders, or deacons of the church or congregation, to which she belongs, that she still remains the widow of the deceased member.

8. That no widow who shall be entitled to any benefit from this Society, shall at any time or times, sell or otherwise dispose of her annuity or any part thereof; that no sum or sums of money, shall or will be paid by this Society, but to such widow only whose receipt alone shall be accepted by the Trustees for the payment thereof; and in case it shall be discovered that any widow has, directly or indirectly, sold or parted with her interest as aforesaid, then, upon satisfactory proof thereof,

such annuity shall immediately cease, and neither such widow, nor any person for or on her account, shall have any further claim or demand on this Society.

V.

*The Method of managing the Affairs of the Society.*

1. That this Society be under the direction of twenty-five Trustees in London, together with a Treasurer and Secretary, and of twenty-five Trustees for the country.

That the Trustees in London, consist of the following twelve Ministers and thirteen Laymen :

The Rev. J. Brooksbank ; J. Hamilton, M. D. ; Thomas Hawies, M. D. ; R. Hill ; H. Hunter, D. D. ; A. Mather ; J. Rippon, D. D. ; J. Towers ; J. Townsend ; A. Waugh ; M. Wilks ; W. Winkworth.

Lay Trustees, Mr. J. R. Burchett ; R. Cowie ; G. Durant ; J. Fenn ; S. Foyster ; J. Hardcastle ; J. Neale ; J. Reyner ; W. Sims ; C. Sundius ; J. Theakston ; J. Wilson, and  
G. Wolfe :



G. Wolffe:—in which proportion, the London Trustees shall always be chosen at all the future elections.

And that the Trustees for the country, shall be the following :

The Rev. J. Brewer, Birmingham ; J. Charles, Bala ; S. Greatheed, Newport Pagnel ; T. Gritten, Kendal ; P. Oliver, Chester ; Mr. J. Barnes, Liverpool ; D. Charles, Carmarthen ; W. Cruden, Aberdeen ; D. Dale, Glasgow ; W. Gillespy, Glasgow ; J. Gewger, Ramsgate ; J. Gwinnap, Falmouth ; R. Haldane, Stirling ; J. A. Minchin, Gosport ; J. Parkinson, Norwich ; A. Pitcairn, Edinburgh ; A. Pope, Bristol ; J. Sanders, Plymouth ; R. Sheriff, Leith ; W. Smith, Newcastle upon Tyne ; R. Spear, Manchester ; T. Thompson, Hull ; J. Walker, Rotherham ; W. Witteridge, Far End, near Bootle ; and W. Wigney, Brighton.

2. A General Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held in London, on the Monday after the second Wednesday in May, at the Scots Church, London Wall, for the purpose of choosing Trustees and other officers, which shall be done by ballot.

3. That



3. That four of the London Trustees, viz. two Ministers and two Laymen, shall go out annually by lot, but shall be eligible for re-election the following year.

4. That there shall be also three General Meetings of the Society; to be held on the first day after Midsummer, Michaelmas and Christmas, Sundays excepted, for the admitting members and transacting other necessary business.

## VI.

### *Regulations for the Trustees.*

1. The Trustees shall have the power to receive Subscriptions, Donations, Bequests, and all monies payable to this Fund, and to place out upon Government, or other good and sufficient securities, the Stock and Capital of this Society, in the name of the Treasurer and three of their number, who shall be appointed at their first sitting after each Annual Meeting, and who shall be at liberty to sell and dispose of such part of the said Stock,  
as

as may be necessary to pay the Annuitants, and to alter and exchange the Funds, provided it be done with the concurrence and approbation of the Trustees in London; and provided always that no part of the Society's fund shall be lent upon houses, buildings, or any personal security whatsoever.

2. That the Treasurer and Trustees, shall serve without fee, perquisite, or reward, excepting their necessary expences incurred in doing the business of this Society, which shall be paid out of the Funds of the Society.

3. That the Treasurer and Trustees, shall lay before the Society at its General Meetings, their Books, Accounts, Vouchers, and other Papers, and submit them to examination.

4. That they shall make out annually a fair statement of the Fund, with its Receipts and Disbursements to be laid before the Annual Meeting, to be examined and signed by the Chairman of the said Annual Meeting, to be printed and presented to every member of this Society, and to all such persons as may be contributors to the benefit thereof.

5. That the Trustees shall have a power to choose

choose their own Chairman, and to appoint the time and places of their meeting.

6. That a number not less than seven of the Trustees, shall be sufficient to do the business of this Society.

7. That the books of the Trustees, shall be open at convenient times, for the inspection of all the members of this Society.

W. F. PLATT, Sec.

*Holywell Mount.*



